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THE PATRIOT



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OEF reaches four-year mark



A Soldier from Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment (Airborne) crosses a stream during a patrol through Paktika Province in March. (Photo by Sgt. Adrian Schulte, CJTF-76 Public Affairs)

Story by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, – Four years ago, America launched its counterattack against terrorism, hammering terrorist targets in Afghanistan and ushering in Operation Enduring Freedom and the global war on terror.

That volley, launched Oct. 7, 2001, targeted far more than al Qaeda training camps and facilities and the repressive Taliban regime in Afghanistan, President Bush noted in announcing the attacks during a White House address. It sent an unmistakable message to terrorist organizations worldwide that the United States and its coalition partners refuse to live under a cloud of fear and intimidation, he said.

Bush emphasized that the action represented just one front in an ongoing U.S. effort against terror networks.

“Today, we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader,” the president said.

Bush also presented his challenge to the world to stand up against terrorism. “Every nation has a choice to make,” he said. “In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril.”

Operation Enduring Freedom began after the Taliban rejected U.S. demands made following terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Bush had called on Afghanistan’s leaders to close terrorist training camps and hand over al Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden. The president also demanded the return of all unjustly detained foreign nationals and the opening of terrorist training sites to U.S. inspection.

When the terrorists ignored those demands, about 15 land-based bombers and 25 Navy strike aircraft from carriers launched the first strikes in Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition, U.S. and British ships and submarines launched some 50 Tomahawk missiles, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers reported that day.

The forces targeted Taliban-held airfields, terrorist training camps, command-and-control nodes, and anti-aircraft positions in what defense leaders described as a blend of 21st-century technology and 19th-century military tactics. The effort combined air power, precision-guided munitions and state-of-the-art communications with thousands of Afghan warriors on horseback or foot.

Initially, the operation involved a relatively small force — a few hundred special operations forces and thousands of Afghan forces in the Northern Alliance supported by powerful U.S. air support. U.S. Marines and soldiers joined the force to clean out remnants of terrorist elements still in Afghanistan.

Later, Operation Enduring Freedom shifted to a broader-based effort aimed at creating conditions in Afghanistan that caused people worn down by more than 23 years of war to reject terrorists and their activities outright.

That involved establishing provincial reconstruction teams that dot the country to extend security and the reach of the national government into the provinces. Today, NATO commands nine of the teams, and the Coalition, 13.

Four years later, the Coalition in Afghanistan remains strong, representing a key front in the overall global war on terror. More than 21,000 members of Combined Forces Command Afghanistan —

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Private "Mac" McDonald, Bamian Provisional Reconstruction Team urges on one of the donkeys used to carry in food and tools into the flood ravaged Ghandak Valley. (Photo courtesy of New Zealand Army)

Kiwis provide much needed aid to ravaged village

Story by Capt. Cam Stapleton
New Zealand Army

BAMIAN PROVISIONAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM - During a recent patrol into the Ghandak Valley, Kiwi Team 3, part of the New Zealand Defense Force Provincial Reconstruction Team based in Bamian, Afghanistan, carried in by donkey train a large quantity of food and reconstruction tools to a village devastated by floods earlier in the year.

In an earlier patrol, the members of Kiwi 3 located a village that had been almost completely swept away by floodwaters that had surged down a large valley system. The village leader said that seven people were killed and that two were still missing, presumed to be buried under tons of gravel and rock that lies

where most of the village once stood. The families who remain occupy the mud houses on the sides of a hill that managed to survive the ordeal and in some cases 10 or more families now live in a space previously occupied by only a single one.

The soldiers who walked into the area with the donkeys and their handlers were amazed at just how much each donkey was able to carry. At times, due to the weight of their own equipment and ammunition, the patrol members had to work hard to keep up with the donkeys. Upon reaching their destination, village elders and children turned out to help unload the animals and the smiles on their faces were all that was needed to show that such a small gesture can make a huge difference.

Army sends riot kits to Iraq, Afghanistan

Story by Frank Misurelli
Picatinny Arsenal Public Affairs

PICATINNY ARSENAL, N.J.- The first shipment of 68 special sets of non-lethal riot and crowd control items should now be in the hands of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to Kevin T. Wong, an official with the Office of Project Manager for Close Combat Systems here who oversees the program.

The first kits were shipped to selected units in Iraq and Afghanistan in July in response to an urgent requirement request from field commanders. The Army is planning to purchase a total of 438 kits, he said.

Officially known as a non-lethal capabilities set, each kit contains five different commercial and government items as well as several new innovative technologies.

A NLCS is designed to support a 30-Soldier platoon and contains a mix of counter-personnel and -material systems, protective equipment, enhancement devices, training devices and allocations.

Among the counter-personnel items found in each kit are 12-gauge, 40 mm and 60 mm non-lethal munitions or grenades. These items permit commanders to apply military force in crowd and riot control conditions while reducing risks to non-combatants.

Counter-material devices contained in an NLCS kit include tire spikes, known as caltrops, and a portable vehicle-arresting barrier, which is a containment net that can stop a speeding vehicle. Both are used to deny vehicles access to critical facilities at roadblocks and checkpoints.

The NLCS also contains face shields, shin guards and body shields that give troops the means to avoid bodily injury during civil confrontations.

Each kit also is equipped with voice amplification devices for communication and high intensity lighting to illuminate operational areas.

They also include training items for instructing Soldiers in the proper use and deployment of NLCS equipment.

Recently added to the NLCS is the M2 vehicle lightweight arresting device. The VLAD can stop and capture a 5,500-pound wheeled vehicle traveling at 30 miles per hour within a 200 foot distance without permanent or serious injury to occupants.

The NLCS kits are packaged in large, weatherproof containers that are transported easily to the mission site.

They can be used in a variety of situations requiring enhanced security.

THE PATRIOT

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**CJTF-76
Commander**

Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya

**CJTF-76
Public Affairs Officer**

Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara

Editor

Sgt. Adrian Schulte

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The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for style, brevity and clarity.

Take pictures within your units. Look for unique shots that show your unit's mission and E-mail them to: schultea@cjtf76.centcom.mil

In the subject line, type "Photo Contest" and your name.

Submit by end of each month. The winner will be notified by e-mail. Three photos max per month.

Winning photos will run in **The Patriot**.

Photographer will also receive a Commanding General coin and a 2-Star note.

Include Name, Rank, Unit, Job Description and hometown of photographer. Also, provide in the caption - the date, location, unit mission and identify any troops.

Photo from the field

Photo by Spc. Mike Pryor



A round from an MK-19 grenade launcher sails through the air as paratroopers from Team Bravo, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, fire their weapons during a live fire react-to-contact training exercise in Maidan Shar, Wardak Province, Afghanistan Oct. 22

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

Many nations, one team

Photos by Senior Airman Vanessa Walsh
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD - More than 500 people attended CJTF-76's International Day Oct. 22. The Equal Opportunity sponsored event featured a food tasting, informational displays and cultural demonstrations

The Coalition countries represented included Korea, New Zealand, Slovakia, Poland, France and Afghanistan.

"It was a learning event, which brought together Coalition forces," said Sgt. Maj. Nelida Rabassa. "It helps us to better understand each other and develop friendships."



Republic of Korea troops give a Tae Kwon Do demonstration at Bagram Airfield's International Day.



New Zealand troops perform a traditional Maori Haka dance Oct. 22 at the cultural event at Bagram Airfield.



A United Arab Emirates troop pours coffee for UAE visitors Oct. 22 at the International Day.



Sgt. N Ors, French soldier, looks over New Zealand weapons Oct. 22 at the International Day hosted by CJTF-76 Equal Opportunity.

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76



Maj. Rick Johnson, civil affairs officer with Task Force Longhorn, talks with elders about the needs of their village located outside of Herat city in May. Provisional reconstruction teams have played a vital role in Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Sgt. Tara Teel, CJTF-76 Public Affairs)

Four years of Enduring Freedom

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more than 17,900 U.S. servicemembers and more than 3,100 troops from 20 allied nations—conduct full-spectrum operations, from combat to humanitarian activities, to defeat terrorism and establish enduring security in the country.

During a Sept. 23 briefing with Pentagon reporters, Army Col. Kevin Owens, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Afghanistan, said Coalition operations have “significantly degraded the enemy combatants in Afghanistan.”

“The enemy can’t offer the people of Afghanistan anything but fear and ignorance,” and their military operations have been reduced to uncoordinated and random rocket and mortar attacks and roadside bombs, said Owens, who also commands Combined Task Force Bayonet and Regimental Command South, in Afghanistan.

“I’m confident things are heading in the right direction,” he said. “And I’m also confident that we are starting to gain irreversible

momentum.”

Meanwhile, progress continues in building Afghanistan’s security forces, which currently number more than 30,000 soldiers and more than 50,000 police. Owens told reporters those forces continue to increase in capabilities.

“The Afghan National Army is a work in progress,” he said, and is made up of “enormously capable and motivated and professional soldiers, particularly at the individual and small-unit level.”

Efforts continue to improve their logistics systems, command-and-control systems and maintenance operations, and, Owens said, U.S. and Coalition soldiers are “working shoulder-to-shoulder with them” to make those improvements.

Owens called the troops “absolutely courageous,” highly motivated and proud of what they’re contributing to their country.

Equally important, he said, the Afghan National Army soldiers “are absolutely revered” by the Afghan people, who are witnessing “an army that is raised from

their ranks, that is representative of all tribes and ethnicities across Afghanistan, providing a secure environment for them.”

As the Coalition helps the Afghans continue the battle against terrorist threats in their country, they’re also helping set conditions for Afghanistan to succeed as a fledgling new democracy.

Millions of Afghans defied the Taliban and al Qaeda remnants in the country and elected Hamid Karzai as their president during Oct. 9, 2004, presidential elections. On Sept. 18, the Afghans returned to the polls, this time to elect a lower house of parliament and councils for each of their nation’s 34 provinces.

“We believe the real winners in this process are the people of Afghanistan, who courageously took a stand against years of violence and oppression and took a major step forward toward peace and prosperity,” said Army Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76 following the Sept. 18 elections.

“The success of Afghan elections clearly shows how earnestly Afghan people want a truly free and democratic country,” agreed Army Lt. Col. Michael Fenzel, deputy commanding officer for Regional Command East. “These elections are yet another powerful reminder, among many I have witnessed, that Afghanistan will not be controlled by the Taliban, al Qaeda, or other enemy forces.”

Meanwhile, other conditions around Afghanistan demonstrate continued progress: a growing economy, a boom in school attendance by girls as well as boys, and work on the “Ring Road” that links the country.

Owens said these efforts go hand in hand toward building a new Afghanistan. “Our enduring lines of operation are security, good governance and reconstruction,” he said. “I believe all of these are interrelated, and you can’t have one without the other.”

Army Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, who took the reins of Combined Forces Command Afghanistan in

early May, said the credit for much of the progress to date goes to U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

During the ceremony marking his assumption of command, Eikenberry pledged to “continue to work together, build security forces and support the rebuilding of Afghanistan.”

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, speaking to Pentagon reporters Sept. 20, said history will record the historic developments that have taken place in Afghanistan during the past four years as a major step forward for freedom.

“Think of it,” Rumsfeld said. “The country that hosted Osama bin Laden, that supported training camps for al Qaeda, endured decades of civil war, Soviet occupation, drought, Taliban brutality, is now a democracy that fights terrorists instead of harboring them.”

Those who have been involved in the country’s transformation “can be enormously proud,” the secretary said.

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

New web policy premiers in CJOA

CJTF-76 members must register all websites and website content or face punitive actions

Story by Senior Airman
Vanessa Walsh
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

A new Combined Joint Task Force-76 policy requires all personnel assigned to or working for CJTF-76 to register any web page they maintain or have added content to with their chain of command.

The Uniformed Code of Military Justice-punishable initiative is an operational security measure intended to prevent small pieces of information from being posted to the internet.

Official websites must continue to follow Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps guidelines; however the policy change directly targets personal, unofficial websites and blogs with new operational security limitations.

The prohibited postings include classified and for official use only information, casualty information prior to notification of next-of-kin, Privacy Act information, information re-

"We're working in a dangerous environment, and our enemy isn't stupid. They're scouring the internet for information and OPSEC violations, which this policy intends to prevent. Small pieces of information together can reveal our tactics, techniques and procedures. Ultimately, it places lives in danger. We can not allow that happen."

-Lt. Col. Andrew Squire, CJTF-76
Staff Judge Advocate deputy

garding incidents under ongoing investigation and any information that isn't generally available to the public. Examples of violations include photos of base streets, Department of Defense buildings and the aftermath of enemy attacks.

Casualty information is especially sensitive information, according to Col. Jeff McKittrick, CJTF-76 Staff

Judge Advocate. "The United States military has an obligation to timely and accurately report casualty information to family members. A blog entry with inaccurate information only causes family members undue anguish."

In addition to potential hardships, conditions of fellow servicemembers falls are protected under HIPPA.



"The U.S. military has a respectful process in place to notify casualties' next-of-kin," said McKittrick. "Finding out about a loved ones' death or injury from a blog site lacks the special care and sensitivity the Department of Defense requires."

"The blog policy requires service members to focus on information that, while not classified is still sensitive," said McKittrick.

McKittrick added, the policy is not meant to dissuade CJTF-76 members from writing their personal stories (although some can be prohibited), but rather to ensure they screen shared information.

To help personnel review content, the CJ6 Information Assurance officer maintains a list of all official and unofficial websites and examines their content. Although, this content review is in place, it's ultimately the individuals and their unit MSCs responsibility to en-

force the policy.

"We're working in a dangerous environment, and our enemy isn't stupid," said Lt. Col. Andrew Squire, CJTF-76 Staff Judge Advocate deputy. "They're scouring the internet for information and OPSEC violations, which this policy intends to prevent. Small pieces of information together can reveal our tactics, techniques and procedures. Ultimately, it places lives in danger. We can not allow that happen."

Additionally, Squire reminds CJTF-76 personnel that all personal information placed on or sent over DoD computer systems is subject to monitoring.

"This is a serious issue," he said. "We are not taking violations lightly and will seek UCMJ punishment or adverse administrative action for civilians."

To register a web page, contact Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth Gallifent at DSN 231-2848.

Kiosk provides world of information

Story by Sgt. Matthew
MacRoberts
20th Public Affairs Detachment

Until now the idea of a library of information on communities, local, state and federal government, employment opportunities, schools and education, health, tourism and other customized information that would be available to service members may have seemed a world away.

Located at the Pat Tillman USO center, though, a kiosk system provides immediate library access to service members stationed at, or traveling through, Bagram Air-



Spc. Kristal Mason uses the new library kiosk located at the Tillman USO Center at Bagram Airfield. (Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth Gallifent)

field. The kiosk is designed to deliver electronic library services and information. It provides a direct link to URLs for online information through a preconfigured user menu, providing access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Everything from stock quotes to local weather to healthcare information can be immediately accessed at this free-standing, library terminal.

Although Internet access is not controlled, it is Websensed for the same things computers on Bagram Airfield are.

Make sure you bring paper and pen, the system does not allow a user to print information or save to a device via external USB ports.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

Teams have a blast together



Senior Airman Sabrina Baker, an explosive ordnance disposal equipment journeyman with the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron EOD flight, clears a path for members of the U.S. Army's 23rd Ordnance Company from Miesan, Germany, and 5th Maintenance Company from Kaiserslautern, Germany, to load three 5,000-pound rockets onto a wrecker near here Saturday. More than two months of coordination was involved in the joint off-base operation, which allowed airmen and Soldiers to transport the rockets from a Soviet ammunition supply point to a secure site where they were later destroyed.

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Marcus McDonald
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD – Airmen and Soldiers joined forces here Oct. 15 to transport and de-

stroy three 5,000-pound rockets.

Lessons learned from this joint operation will help validate explosive ordnance disposal procedures and improve information available to explosive ordnance disposal technicians throughout the Department of Defense.

“After more than two months of planning, we teamed up with the Army EOD, vehicle maintenance and ammo Soldiers to transport the three rockets from a Soviet ammunition supply point to a secure site where they were later destroyed,” said Tech. Sgt. Dustin Prowell, noncommissioned officer in charge, 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight.

Prowell and the rest of his Air Force EOD team are deployed to Bagram from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

If not destroyed, the rockets could have posed a threat to U.S. and Coalition forces serving here as part of the ongoing Global War on Terrorism.

“Each of these rockets contained more than 2,000 pounds of propellant, which could have proved deadly to our forces if they found their way into the wrong hands,” said Prowell. “Our job Saturday was to eliminate that threat.”

Army Sgt. William Berry, 23rd Ordnance Company, Miesan, Germany, said his team's interaction with the Air Force always proves beneficial.

“We regularly work alongside our Air Force counterparts to help get whatever job needs to be done in a timely manner,” said Berry. “The best part of our interaction with them is that we can, in support of the ongoing war effort, move and/or dispose of ammunition whenever called upon.”

Senior Airman Sabrina Baker, EOD equip-

See EOD page 7

Expert at deploying

Story and photo by
Sgt. Adrian Schulte
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO - This is truly an expeditionary Army. It is becoming rarer and rarer to find a Soldier who has not spent some time deployed. For some this is a one-time thing. For others, this is a way of life.

For Staff Sgt. Billy Ray Todd, mortuary affairs specialist, Alpha Company, 307th Forward Support Battalion based out of Forward Operating Base Salerno, this has been his way of life for the past six years.

Since 1999, Todd hasn't spent more than four months at his home station. He has deployed to Kosovo, Philippines, Iraq and now Afghanistan fulfilling his duties as a mortuary affairs specialist.

Mortuary affairs, an often thankless job, hides in the shadows of the Army's every-day responsibilities. The tough job of working with the remains of fallen service members falls on the shoulders of people like Todd.



Staff Sgt. Billy Ray Todd, mortuary affairs specialist, Company A, 307th Forward Support Battalion, has been deployed every year since 1999.

When Todd joined the Army 16 years ago, he didn't anticipate doing what he is now.

“When I found out they do recovery operations in Vietnam and other past war zones, that got me curious because it was something nice to go do,” Todd said. “A family member has been missing somebody for over 30 years and you go out there

and recover those remains, you are bringing closure to the family.”

The realities of war, though, set in for Todd in 1999 during the conflict in Kosovo and then the ensuing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“I never thought I was going to be doing this in a combat zone until Kosovo,” Todd said. “I didn't expect it to be the way it is now.”

Working this often grim job and the deploying constantly has taken a toll on Todd.

“In Iraq, I got tired of seeing our own coming in,” Todd said. “The hardest part was that when you see them you would know that they would never go back home again. You lost somebody that was doing the same thing you used to do like getting up in the morning and doing PT... going through the everyday life of being in the military.”

The effects of these experiences have not lost their effect on him though.

“These experiences have made me very humble,” he said. “It makes you think about a lot of things.”

“It is a positive thing that I have been able to fill a gap that is needed... that really is the only positive thing about it because a person does get tired,” Todd said with a chuckle.

Todd has four more years of service to his country before he retires from the service at which time he plans to teach history.

“I think 20 years of mortuary affairs is enough for anybody,” he said.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil



Staff Sgt. David Famigiletti, pavement and heavy equipment operator, 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group, tops off the first load of landfill-bound demolished concrete at the groundbreaking of the new passenger terminal here. Expected to be complete by early 2006, the 7,750-square-foot passenger terminal will help ensure American and Coalition forces are mission capable as the Global War on Terrorism continues. RED HORSE is an acronym for rapid engineer deployable heavy operational repair squadron engineers. Sergeant Famigiletti, a native of Waterbury, Conn., is deployed here from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

New terminal opening

New facility to keep war fighters flowing

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Marcus McDonald
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD – RED HORSE (rapid engineer deployable heavy operational repair squadron engineers) warriors here are laying the foundation for a \$932,000 passenger terminal designed to keep American and Coalition forces mission capable as the Global War on Terrorism continues.

In early 2006, people transiting the 7,750-square-foot facility here will notice additional space and a more secure area.

“Once this project is complete, military and civilian travelers will see a more spacious facility, which is better designed for the potential flow of more than 300 people traveling through Afghanistan’s busiest hub at any one time,” said 1st Lt. Megan Leitch, project officer. “Also, a new secure waiting area will give terminal administrators the opportunity to better manage flights in and out of the country.”

Leitch’s 24-person team is part of the 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group deployed here from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Lt. Col. Walter Fulda, 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron commander, said the new passenger terminal will ensure mission readiness.

“Our existing passenger terminal is undersized and does not meet the operational requirements of today’s war fighters,” said Fulda, deployed here from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. “This new passenger terminal will be the hub of a larger passenger services campus at Bagram to include a new customs facility and the newly opened USO.”

Fulda said his passenger services section keeps war fighters on the move as they pursue peace throughout the country and region.

“Our role is to rapidly and accurately move people within the Afghanistan and U.S. CENTCOM (Central Command) area of responsibility,” said Fulda. “From ensuring Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines

are deployed to their units, to making sure other war fighters get much-needed rest and relaxation time while deployed, our passenger terminal staff gets the right people into place at the right time.”

According to Leitch the completion of this RED HORSE project, along with the new post office and customs office, is making way for the construction of a cargo ramp here in the summer of 2006.

On an average month, the 455th ELRS processes 8,000 people through the passenger terminal.

“Although the passenger services responsibility belongs to our squadron, Bagram’s passenger movement team includes the 14th Movement Control Team, Kellogg, Brown and Root contractors, and the Joint Personnel Reception Center,” said Master Sgt. Brian Smith, passenger service noncommissioned officer in charge. “The movement of passengers is truly a joint effort and the 455th ELRS cannot perform its mission in support of deployed personnel with the close coordination and dedication of the whole Bagram team.”

Different branches, same mission

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ment journeyman, said she’s enjoying her role in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

“One of the best parts of our job is that it is out of the ordinary,” Baker said. “Everyone contributes their piece of the overall puzzle, but our job is distinctly unique. Not many people can say they defuse bombs and blow things up for a living.

“It’s rewarding to know that my job directly impacts our U.S. and Coalition forces as well as the local community,” she continued. “By going out and clearing these hazards, we are helping prevent accidents and improving the area and overall well-being of the people of Afghanistan.”

Whether taught in a classroom or on-the-job environment, EOD technicians here expect the lessons learned from the Oct. 15 transport and disposal operations to bring in more big dividends.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

Hey sis, fancy seeing you here

Sisters make most of deployment together

Story by Spc. Laura E. Griffin
TF Devil Public Affairs

CAMP CHAPMAN – Specialists Elizabeth and Juanita Rodriguez are sharing more than the same laugh, the same job, and the same last name these days. They are also sharing an experience that has brought them closer as sisters; they are both stationed at Camp Chapman, Afghanistan, during their deployment for Operation Enduring Freedom VI.

The Rodriguez's, both National Guard Automated Logistics Specialists with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Mechanized Infantry Unit out of Lubbock, Texas, never dreamed that they would be deployed together.

"We got mobilized together, we trained for our deployment together, and we left home together..." said Juanita, 24.

"...But I was supposed to go to Iraq," said Elizabeth, 20, finishing her sister's sentence.

That was the first of several expected separations that never happened for the sisters.

Another came when they arrived at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, where they were told that they would be going to separate bases here. They were both surprised to see their names on the same list to go to Chapman.

"We just think it's so cool that we're together because we know that we're O.K.," said Elizabeth.

"Yeah, we're getting to share the same experiences," added Juanita. "It's easier on our parents too because they know that we're together and can look out after each other."

And look out after each other they do. They have been through several rocket attacks at

Chapman and are usually in the same bunker together, but on one occasion, the sisters were separated.

"Elizabeth turned to me during a lull in the rockets and said, 'Can I go check on my sister?'" said Master Sgt. Rudolfo Martinez, the Civil Affairs Team – B noncommissioned officer in charge. "That really impressed me. It's just an example of the love these sisters have for each other."

The sisters admit that they've gotten to spend more time together since they've been deployed than they've spent together in years.

"At home, we don't really hang out or see each other unless we go to our mom's house at the same time," said Juanita. "We haven't lived together for six years. Now we get to have lunch and dinner together every day that we're not on the same guard shift. When we are on the same shift, we have to take turns getting lunch."

Juanita, who had dreamed of being in the military since she was a small girl, was the first of

the sisters to join. She signed up in 1999.

In 2001, when Elizabeth was a Junior in high school, she called Juanita to ask her opinion on if she should also join the military.

"It was Juanita who convinced me to get the same job as her," said Elizabeth. "I did a split-option enlistment because I was still in high school, so I went to basic training the summer between my Junior and Senior years and went to (Advanced Individual Training) after graduation."

The Rodriguez's are typical siblings. They share many things in common, but have their own individual personalities.

"We're a lot alike, but we're so different at the same time," said Juanita.

"We're both outspoken, but Juanita's more serious and responsible," said Elizabeth.

"At home, I help to make sure she's squared away for drill," said Juanita.

"Yeah, she plays 'big sister' a lot," said Elizabeth, laughing and elbowing Juanita.

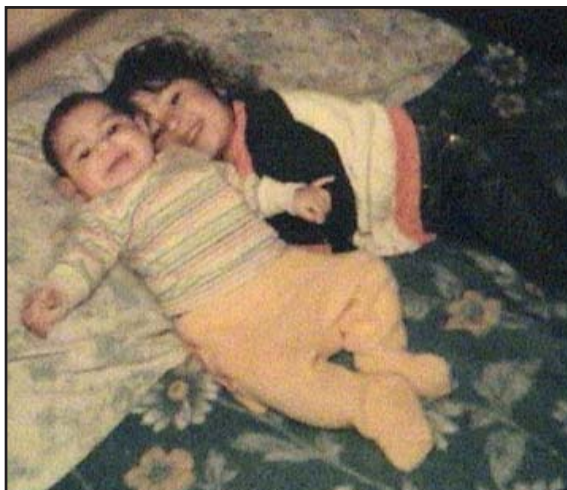
In the evenings after work, the sisters like to do their own things. Juanita likes to hang out with some of the other Soldiers and play volleyball while Elizabeth prefers curling up to a good movie or watching her sister play volleyball from the sidelines.

Like most siblings, they have their quarrels too.

"Even though we're deployed, we still have our sibling spats," said Juanita.

"We'll be cussing each other out then say, 'Okay, you want to go to lunch?'" said Elizabeth.

The sisters left two younger sisters, Cynthia, 11, and Alexa, 2, and their parents Ricardo and Maria behind in Plains, Texas. They are eagerly waiting to all be together again.



Sisters Elizabeth (left) and Juanita Rodriguez in a family photo circa 1986.



Elizabeth (left) and Juanita Rodriguez are sisters stationed together at Camp Chapman, Afghanistan. They are both Automated Logistics Specialists with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Mechanized Infantry Unit.

Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet



Medical mission reaches into battle-weary province

Spc. Melanie Williams, Charlie Company, 173rd Support Battalion (Airborne), shows an Afghan girl proper dental hygiene techniques during a Village Medical Outreach Mission Oct. 21 in Atghar, Zabul Province.

**Story and photos by
Staff Sgt.
Jacob Caldwell**
*TF Bayonet Public
Affairs*

ZABUL PROVINCE – Coalition and Afghan doctors conducted a Village Medical Outreach mission Oct. 20-25 in embattled Zabul Province, offering some much needed aid to three different villages and the surrounding areas.

“Our number one purpose is to help the people,” said Capt. Joshua Gaspard, Headquarters and Headquarters Company Executive Officer, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne). “We provide medical support and hence the title, Village Medical Outreach, but we bring other assets.”

“We did bring a mechanic and we were able to help the ANA and the ANP on some of their vehicles but the number one thing is to get out there and try to help the populace,” said Gaspard.

Gaspard has experience running the VMOs in Zabul Province, this being the fourth.

Over the span of the four VMOs, the missions have covered the majority of Zabul Province; Atghar, Zanjhir, and Argandahb Valley being the last three areas needing coverage.

Every mission has difficulties inherent in it, this VMO

mission was no exception.

“If you were to look across the board for the number of individuals involved, you would probably have the same number of MOSs,” said Gaspard. “As an infantry officer, it’s normally pretty easy. I’ve got a bunch of 11Bs and I say ‘Let’s go take the hill.’ For these guys you’ve got every MOS you could possibly imagine and we try to integrate them together to build a winning team.”

Different jobs bring different perspectives on the different problems. Security of the VMO site was the

primary concern for Staff Sgt. Jeremy Carey, HHC 2-503rd and mission NCOIC.

The primary security concern being the proper flow of people in and out of the site.

Having an experienced team run the missions has paid dividends in lessons learned.

“A problem that we have had is transferring equipment from one location to the next,” said Carey. “We have eliminated that by putting out a basic packing list and consolidating everything into small boxes that we can load onto Gators (small four-wheel drive vehicles).”



Spc. Zachary Williams, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne) distributes vitamins and school supplies in Zabul Province.

While the crowds were smaller than usual, they did eventually file in with doctors treating approximately 500 men, women and children every day, according to Maj. John Drobnica, a doctor from the 46th Medical Detachment, Texas National Guard unit.

The doctors have seen a commonality in the ailments they have treated.

“Most of the problems that we see are abdominal or stomach discomfort probably because of the food source,” said Drobnica.

Headaches and joint pain also top the list, according to Drobnica.

The lifestyle, environment, and malnutrition are the main culprits.

“They have poor nutrition, and they are an agrarian society and they work their bottoms off,” said Drobnica.

A strong effort was made to get Afghan doctors involved in this mission for the purpose of getting local people used to seeing Afghan doctors and also to be able to refer difficult cases to local hospitals, according to Drobnica.

“The goal over time is for us to be a supporting force and not the delivery force for health care,” said Drobnica.

This mission had a different feel to it, probably because of Ramadan, according to Gaspard.

“People are a little more tired and a little hungrier and the populace is just a little irritated at life right now.”

“We started out each day a little slow. Normally at the beginning of the day we have 100 males, 50 children and 20 females waiting, whereas here we opened up and didn’t have anybody. They slowly trickled in.”

Thirteen enemy killed in RC South

Story by Sgt. Tara Teel
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

DEHRAHWOD – During offensive operations near Deh Rahwod, Uruzgan Province, Afghan National Army and U.S. forces were attacked by small-arms, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenade fire Oct. 27. As a result, one U.S. service member and an ANA soldier were wounded and medevaced to Tarin Kowt for treatment. Both are currently in stable condition.

In a second contact with the enemy just a few kilometers from the first location, one ANA soldier

was killed and another three were wounded. The wounded were medevaced to Tarin Kowt where one is currently in stable condition and the other two have been discharged back to their unit.

During another offensive operation north of Dah Rawood, two enemy fighters were killed after they fired upon coalition forces. No coalition forces were injured during this incident.

A total of 13 enemy fighters were killed in the three engagements.

Coalition aircraft and attack helicopters provided close air support for the operations.

What's Happening / News You Can Use

Get mail faster

Note from spouse.

I discovered today why letters from Afghanistan go through JFK. The mail clerks in Afghanistan are trained to put any letters marked "FREE" where the stamp is supposed to go into the bags destined for JFK. Any letters marked "MPS" get off-loaded at Ramstein where they are sorted and delivered to CMRs in Europe.

Families should tell their Soldier spouses to be sure and mark their letters to Europe-based DoD addresses "MPS" instead of "FREE." Of course, mail going to the states can be marked "FREE" when mailed from downrange.

Just want to pass along a helpful tip my husband learned from talking to the mail clerks in Afghanistan.

GI Bill Apprenticeship and OJT program offers up to \$12,000

If you are currently in the guard or reserve, the On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program offers you an alternative way to use your VA (GI Bill) education and training benefits.

While you are being trained for a new job, you can receive monthly training benefits from the Veterans Affairs in addition to your regular salary, that means you can receive up to \$753 a month (\$216 for Reserve) tax-free, on top of your regular salary! That's up to \$12,000 in cash benefits over 2 years, for training in an On-The-Job or Apprenticeship training program.

You may be eligible if you are otherwise eligible for the GI Bill either under the Active Duty (Veteran) or Reserve GI Bill programs. Contact your local State Approving Agency (SAA). Your SAA will help you get started on the process and answer any questions you may have. To get more information on the GI Bill directly from the VA, call toll free 1-888-GI-BILL-1.

Holiday mailing deadlines

Parcel Post -- Nov. 12

Space available mail -- Nov. 26

Parcel airlift mail -- Dec. 3

Priority Mail -- Dec. 5

First class (letter & mail) -- Dec. 5

Reality Check

By Staff Sgt. Bryan Dorman



New Army mentorship program offered

The new Army Mentorship Community and Army Mentorship Resource Center websites are now operational and available to those with Army Knowledge Online access.

As part of the new mentorship philosophy, "Leaving a Legacy Through Mentorship," the sites are designed to help bring mentors and mentees together. All Active Component Soldiers, Reserve Component Soldiers, Department of Army Civilians, Spouses, Retirees, Veterans, and Contractors, who are authorized AKO access, are encouraged to participate in the program.

Within the Army Mentorship Community, there are multiple tailored mentorship forums. Each forum offers the opportunity for open dialogue between voluntary mentors and those seeking advice, guidance, and mentorship.

In these forums, open discussions are highly encouraged in order to help others develop and grow personally and professionally.

The Army Mentorship Resource Center offers valuable information for both mentors and mentees including related articles, a mentorship handbook, a sample Individual Development Action Plan, and a searchable mentorship profile server for mentors.

Visit <http://mentorship.army.mil> and you can also log on to the AKO Army Mentorship Community.

Submit your unit's story to The Patriot

Tell the whole CJOA what your unit is doing.

The Patriot is always on the lookout for amateur journalists and photographers who have a story to tell.

Send your stories to schultea@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

Stand alone photos are also welcome. Remember when submitting stories and photos to remember the 5 W's of journalism: who, what, where, when and why. Also include full names, rank and units of troops involved and of the author. Stories will be edited for content and to meet journalistic standards.

SGLI VGLI update

On September 30, 2005, the "Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Enhancement Act of 2005" became Law. The law makes permanent increases in the maximum SGLI amount and VGLI amount from \$250,000 to \$400,000 and increases the increment amount to be divisible by \$50,000. The law is retroactive to September 1, 2005, and applies to deaths occurring on or after said date. In addition the law requires the Secretary to notify a married service member's spouse of: (i) the service members eligibility and failure to be insured; (ii) the service members election for less than the maximum amount of available insurance; (iii) a reduction in the service members amount of insurance coverage; or (iv) the service members designation of a person, other than the spouse or a child of the member, as the policy beneficiary. The notification must in writing unless prior notification has been provided before the new designation, and the spouse is not a designated policy beneficiary.

Free Stuff!

The Patriot will feature a web site per issue which offers free stuff for service members.

Free Books, DVDs, CDs

<http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/forum/index.php>